

Lincoln

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

MARCH 6, 1872.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. WRIGHT made the following

REPORT:

[To accompany bill S. 59.]

The Committee on Claims, to whom was referred the bill (S. 59) authorizing the Secretary of the Treasury to settle and pay the accounts of Colonel James F. Jaquess, have had the matter under consideration and submit the following report:

The bill is based upon the claim of the applicant for \$6,719, for money expended by him while in the secret service during the civil war.

The testimony of the applicant, and others is herewith submitted. This testimony, in the opinion of your committee, establishes the following facts:

1. That he was employed by the late President Lincoln in the secret service of the Government.

2. Under this employment he visited Richmond on several occasions, passing through the rebel lines at great personal hazard. He also visited Niagara, New York, and other places, acting, all the time, under instructions.

3. He, in this way, rendered very important service to the Government, which was more than once recognized by the President, and the strongest assurances given that his disbursements, at least, should be paid.

4. By reason of the circumstances, this claim is of the most sacred character, and the obligation to pay the same cannot well be disputed.

5. He expended, while engaged in this work, the sum of \$6,719, allowing nothing for his time, no part of which has ever been paid.

6. His account was made out, examined by Mr. Lincoln, its correctness acknowledged, and would have been paid—at least this is the fair tendency of the testimony—but for the untimely death of the President.

7. The services were rendered in the year 1864, and the delay in the presentation of the claim is fully explained in the accompanying testimony.

In view of these facts, referring to the testimony herewith submitted, your committee believe the claim to be just, and recommend the passage of the bill providing for the payment of the sum above named, \$6,719.

All of which is most respectfully submitted.

CLAIM OF COLONEL J. F. JAQUESS.

Proceedings before the Committee on Military Affairs, United States Senate, May 27, 1870.

JAMES F. JAQUESS, being examined, produces the following paper :

“EXECUTIVE MANSION,

“Washington, May 18, 1864.

“*To whom it may concern:*

“Colonel James F. Jaquess, of the Seventy-third Illinois Volunteers, is hereby given leave of absence until further orders.

“A. LINCOLN.

“WAR DEPARTMENT,

“Washington, May 18, 1864.

“Official copy :

“JAMES A. HARDIE,

“Colonel and Inspector General.”

By Mr. HOWARD :

Question. About what time was this order delivered to you, and where ?—Answer. It was delivered to me not far from the 24th or 25th of May, 1864. When I received it I was in front of the enemy's lines, fighting at Kenesaw Mountain. Upon the receipt of this document at General Thomas's headquarters, the following order, the original of which I produce, was issued :

[“Special Field Order No. 150.]

“HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE CUMBERLAND,

Brown's Mill Creek.

“Leave of absence for thirty days is hereby granted to Colonel J. F. Jaquess, Seventy-third Illinois Volunteers, to enable him to perform a special service for which he has been designated. At the end of that time he will, if the service is completed, rejoin his regiment, for duty ; otherwise, he will report by letter, with a view to the extension of his leave.

“By command of Major General Thomas :

“WILLIAM D. WHIPPLE,

“Assistant Adjutant General.”

Q. State to the committee, briefly, what places you visited under that order, consecutively and chronologically, if you can.—A. With these papers came to me at the front a letter from President Lincoln, (which was among the papers I presented to Senator Harlan,) giving me full instructions as to what the President wished me to accomplish, and at the same time directing me, as far as possible, to keep out of Washington.

Q. Where were you when you received that letter ?—A. At General Thomas's headquarters, at the front.

Q. To what place did you first go ?—A. I first went to Richmond. In going to Richmond, I went by way of Baltimore, and from there to Fortress Monroe, and thence to General Grant's headquarters. General Grant put me through the lines on Mr. Lincoln's letter which I showed him.

Q. Did you go through the lines to Richmond and have an interview with Jefferson Davis ?—A. Yes, sir.

Q. How long did you remain in Richmond ?—A. I remained in Richmond three days.

Q. Where then did you go ?—A. After leaving Richmond, I came to Washington, and reported in person to Mr. Lincoln.

Q. Did you make a report to Mr. Lincoln, or to any person under his orders, of the substance of your interview with Davis ?—A. I made a full report to Mr. Lincoln. He was then living out at the Soldier's Home. I went out there and staid all night with him, and made a full verbal report. I had written nothing ; I was afraid to carry anything in writing. Afterwards, Senator Harlan came to me, and said that he wished a full copy of my report to Mr. Lincoln, and I sat down in a room with him and Mr. Sutton, a reporter, who took it down in short-hand, and it was written out in full.

Q. Did you read the report after it was written out in full ?—A. Yes, sir.

Q. What became of that report ?—A. I shall have to refer to the Senator for that. I supposed it was put with Mr. Lincoln's papers at headquarters.

Mr. HOWARD. Does Senator Harlan, who is present, know what became of that report ?

Senator HARLAN. The substance of it was printed as a campaign document. What became of the manuscript I do not know ; it went to the printers.

Mr. HOWARD. What printer ?

Senator HARLAN. I cannot now say. I suppose I could learn, though. We had a printing establishment here under the control of Mr. Polkinhorn that ran a number of presses for us in that campaign ; and we had one in Baltimore, one in Philadelphia, and one in New York ; but I do not now remember to which one of them that manuscript was sent.

Mr. AMES. I would ask Colonel Jaquess whether the short-hand reporter may not have his notes?

Colonel JAQUESS. No; I called on Mr. Sutton and he supposed the papers had been filed at Mr. Lincoln's headquarters, and he had not preserved the notes.

Senator HARLAN. I think I took the notes and all the papers from him at the time. There were some things stated that I did not think it was proper to publish.

By Mr. HOWARD:

Q. In what month, Colonel Jaquess, did you make that report?—A. Early in July, 1864; I do not remember the exact date.

Q. On what other secret service did you then go?—A. When I returned from Richmond, Mr. Lincoln saw, from the report that I made to him, that he was about to commit a very serious blunder in reference to the Niagara Falls negotiations, and he told me to go there with all possible dispatch and see what there was of that; or, in other words, he remarked to me, "I want you to crack that nut immediately." I went there at once and had an interview with those parties at Niagara Falls.

Q. Who were those parties?—A. Clay and Thompson.

Q. Clement C. Clay and Jacob Thompson?—A. Yes, sir; Clement C. Clay and Jacob Thompson were the only parties I saw; there were other parties there, but I had no interviews with any except those two.

Q. Were you at Niagara Falls at the time there was held at that place a sort of convention of rebel leaders and sympathizers and spies, with some persons from the United States who went over to confer with them?—A. I was there at Mr. Lincoln's request. I had made a second visit to those parties before that. I gained access, however, to that convention, as it was called, through Mr. Buchanan.

Q. Ex-President Buchanan?—A. Yes, sir. Mr. Lincoln sent me there to look into it for him. Of course, I had to adopt the best means of getting there, and I found that about the only way in which I could get there was through Mr. Buchanan. So I went to his house and staid with him all day, and drank more liquor while I was in his house than I ever drank in my life, because it was the custom of those who were visiting him at that time; and through him I got full privilege to go into that convention at Niagara Falls, and I learned all their secrets. In a book which I have here you will find a record showing the effect it produced on Mr. Lincoln. (Referring to a book entitled "History of the Great Rebellion," by Thomas B. Kettle, pages 668 *et seq.*) This contains an account of my visit to Richmond and the correspondence. There is another book, "Richmond during the War," by a lady, published in New York by G. W. Carleton & Co., 1867, containing a chapter for my especial benefit, chapter 43, but I do not know that it amounts to much. When I left Mr. Buchanan at his residence at Lancaster, he gave me a letter to a Mr. Folger, of St. Louis, Missouri, a leading man in politics of the times, and who was to be at this convention or council, as it was called by them. I represented a portion of Southern Illinois, was only a working member of the party. Knew John A. Logan, and other leading men of the democratic party, who had been bought up, and gone over to the opposite party, or the enemy, as the republican party was called by them. Among other important facts which I discovered in this movement, was one not so generally credited at the time, viz: That Ex-President Buchanan was thoroughly advised of and familiar with all the movements of the enemy on the border, and in full sympathy with them, and preferred that they should succeed in their wicked design against the Government than that the republican party should succeed in saving and keeping control of the country. I may further state that I met Mr. Folger at Niagara Falls, and through him had unrestricted privilege in the councils of the meetings which followed, which was confined in its deliberations to the best methods of securing the election of the democratic candidate for the Presidency, the defeat of Mr. Lincoln, and the elevation of themselves to power.

Q. When you left Niagara Falls, did you report to Mr. Lincoln?—A. I reported to Mr. Lincoln at that time, and that was the last time I saw him for some weeks.

Q. At what time did you make that report to him?—A. I made my report to him in reference to my first visit to Niagara Falls, I think, on the morning of the 18th July, 1864; but in reference to the other matter of the democratic convention, I did not report to him for some time afterward—some weeks.

Q. What democratic convention? Do you mean that convention at Niagara?—A. Yes, sir. That was after my first visits there. I reported in regard to that some time in August, I think; I have forgotten the precise date. The events occurred consecutively, one after the other.

Q. You were at that democratic convention, as you call it?—A. Yes, sir.

Q. Was Mr. Greeley there at that time?—A. No, sir.

Q. Did you see him there at all?—A. I did not see him there, though I understood he had been there.

Q. Then you reported again to Mr. Lincoln?—A. Yes, sir.

Q. You made two journeys to Niagara Falls?—A. Three.

Q. And reported what you had discovered there to Mr. Lincoln regularly?—A. Yes, sir; personally.

Q. Did you report in writing or verbally?—A. I reported verbally in two cases, in the first two instances, and on the last occasion in writing.

Q. Have you a copy of your last report?—A. No, sir. Mr. Stanton and Mr. Seward both saw the papers, and examined them at headquarters. I did not retain a copy, supposing them to be safe there.

Q. Where did you go after that on secret service?—A. I went into the confederate lines a second time.

Q. How did you get through the lines?—A. I smuggled myself through.

Q. Where did you go when you passed through the confederate lines?—A. I went to Petersburg, and I was also in Richmond.

Q. As you were on secret service, you need not state particularly, unless you choose to do so, what you were doing, because I would not draw from you anything which would be a violation of your personal honor.—A. There is one point to which I ought to call your attention. My next business was to go into the confederate lines to look after a plot that was supposed to be in existence to burn northern cities, and the shipping belonging to the United States. The question was as to the best plan to meet it, supposing the plot to be a fixed fact and one of very great importance; it was supposed that the Government at that time could not really afford to organize a police force to meet the case. I undertook the work of ferreting that thing out and going to the fountain-head. For this purpose I went into the confederate lines and gained access to a gentleman who was acting at the time as the head of the chemical department of the confederate government; I shall not give his name publicly, though I will mention it to any one of the committee privately. He had been employed to put up a composition to be placed in the hands of the parties designated for the accomplishment of this work, and appointed by the confederate government for that purpose. I got access to him and found him a gentleman, a man with a kind heart, with a big heart; and by a kind interview with him I succeeded in inducing him, by practical experiment, to get up a composition that would burn for a given time as though it would burn the world up, and then extinguish itself. He got up, first, a composition that was very inflammable, that only had to be touched with a match and it went off at once like a friction match. He put up another substance in a ball about the size of a hen's egg, or perhaps a little larger, which was inclosed in this outer very inflammable substance, and when fire was touched to this ball it burned very vividly for a moment, and the moment it struck this inside composition it would sparkle and make a fuss very much like damp powder and extinguish itself at once. We experimented in a room where he and I were locked together, with straw and hay; and I saw that the thing was perfectly satisfactory, and I made the arrangement with him to have the plan carried out, to have that used. It cost me between \$1,200 and \$1,300.

Q. What was your object?—A. To defeat the purpose contemplated by them in burning our northern cities and our shipping.

Q. By contriving a match which would extinguish itself and would not take effect?—A. Yes, sir.

Q. Did the person to whom you have alluded, who was making this match, understand your object?—A. Yes, sir; he understood my object.

Q. And that was his object also?—A. Yes, sir.

Q. He was acting in concert with you?—A. Yes, sir.

Q. Had he been employed by the confederate authorities to make this match?—A. Yes, sir.

Q. And the confederate authorities had authorized him to contrive this match for the purpose of doing this vast mischief in northern cities?—A. Yes, sir; and John C. Breckinridge was a leading man in it. I want to call your attention now to a fact that you will find corroborates my statements in reference to this matter. I watched the thing very closely, and perhaps remember it more distinctly than any of you; but I want to know how it came to pass that that plan, so well laid and so well carried out to a certain point, did not succeed in one solitary instance. By examining the records or refreshing your memories in regard to it, you will find that a number of attempts were made in New York, in Boston, and in Philadelphia. I think I remember none in Baltimore, for they rather liked Baltimore. I am not certain but that there were some attempts in Washington City. A number of our steamboats and shipping were sought to be set on fire, and yet it so happened that these attempts did not succeed in one solitary instance. I examined the reports in every case, and it was generally said that the fire was discovered just in time to extinguish it. I remember one case where it was stated that a servant girl in New York heard a strange noise in a room, and she got in just in time to find that a fire had been kindled and put it out. In every instance it was stated that some one accidentally happened to go into the room and discover what was going on in time to extinguish the fire.

Q. So that the failure was intentional on the part of this person who was contriving the match?—A. It was arranged so that it could not be otherwise. It was a concerted plan. The match was to be put down, say on a bed, and the party that was to touch it off was to get out of the way at once, or as soon as possible, supposing the thing was all right. It would burn as though it would burn the world up for a few moments, perhaps half a minute, and then extinguish itself.

Q. So that the whole thing was a mere show?—A. Not on the part of those engaged in it.

Q. But on the part of the inventor and contriver of the match?—A. Yes, sir.

Q. He led the confederate authorities to suppose that he was acting in good faith for the purpose of doing this extensive mischief, while at the same time he was acting in bad faith toward his employers?—A. Yes, sir.

Q. If you anticipate that any injury would result to the inventor of this match by a disclosure of his name, I do not see why it should be disclosed.—A. I prefer not to state it publicly;—I will state it to any member of the committee. There are many things that I could divulge, but if I should do so the result would be my assassination. Still, if you gentlemen will require it, everything shall come out. I have no secrets. I gave my life to my country, and I never expected it to last as long as it has.

Q. Where was your interview with this inventor of the match; was it at Richmond?—A. Yes, sir.

Q. Where did you go then?—A. I came back into our own lines and reported to Mr. Lincoln.

Q. Verbally, or in writing.—A. In writing.

Q. What became of your report?—A. I do not know. I have not seen it.

Q. What next?—A. I next went to the governor of the State of New York.

Q. Under the orders of Mr. Lincoln?—A. At the request of Mr. Lincoln.

Q. Who was governor of New York at that time?—A. Horatio Seymour.

Q. Did you have an interview with him; and, if so, what was it?—A. I had an interview with him by Mr. Lincoln's request. I explained to him, entirely and in full, my visit to Richmond, and all the points connected with it. Mr. Lincoln wished me especially to state to him the fact that I had elicited from Mr. Davis that they were not fighting for slavery, that they were fighting for their independence, and he had repeated it to me under the head of three different propositions, "our independence we will have, or we will have annihilation." Mr. Lincoln requested me to state these facts to Governor Seymour, which I did. I spent three days with him in private, and he seemed rather loth then to let me go. I first laid the plan of bringing Governor Seymour here to have an interview with Mr. Lincoln, for I found the governor in a different state of mind really from what I had expected to find him, and left him in a very different state of mind; but finally I adopted the plan of getting Governor Seymour and Governor Andrew of Massachusetts together. I went to Boston and brought Governor Andrew to New York, and then went to Governor Seymour, at Albany, again, and brought him to New York, and paid the expenses of both of them on the way, and paid their expenses while they were in New York, for the purpose of getting Governor Seymour to two points: first, that he should cease his opposition to the administration—New York was considered a big institution at that time, and it was thought we could not very well do without his influence—first, to cease his opposition to the administration in its vigorous prosecution of the war; and, second, to furnish his quota of troops. Governor Seymour pledged himself to Governor Andrew and myself that for the future he would comply most strictly with our requests.

Q. What was the date of that pledge, as near as you can remember?—A. Just after the presidential election. I thing it was about the middle of November.

Q. Did you report this to Mr. Lincoln?—A. Yes, sir; in writing. You will find on examining the records that after that nothing more was heard of Governor Seymour in opposition to Mr. Lincoln's administration, and he responded promptly to every call after that. I watched him very closely.

Q. The narrative you gave to Mr. Seymour respecting your conversation with Jefferson Davis, in your judgment, had a favorable effect upon Governor Seymour's mind?—A. It had not only a favorable effect, but it made him a different man; and so it did every man of that class that I talked to.

Q. Where did you go next?—A. Previous to my visit to Governor Seymour I made some public speeches and some private speeches to parties who said I had information they were entitled to know something about. From the 1st of December, 1864, to the 1st of January, 1865, I was not very actively engaged, although I was reconciling certain parties who had ill-feelings toward Mr. Lincoln, to whom he wished private explanations to be made. Among these was Mr. Greeley, with reference to his visit to Niagara Falls. I went to Mr. Greeley, but he was not willing to be reconciled. He seemed willing to receive me and hear me; but he was very much incensed at Mr. Lincoln. Greeley says he never swears, but to me he cursed Mr. Lincoln up and down; and I have a witness who can prove it. He called Mr. Lincoln a liar, and would not hear my explanation really about the change in Mr. Lincoln's plans in reference to the Niagara Falls affair. Mr. Lincoln was very desirous that the facts in the case should be explained to Mr. Greeley.

Q. Did you finally succeed in obtaining a hearing with Mr. Greeley?—A. I had two hearings with Mr. Greeley, but I never succeeded in changing his mind in reference to that matter. He insists to this day that Mr. Lincoln lied to him.

Q. A statement which nobody who knew Mr. Lincoln would believe at all, for he was as incapable of lying as any man I ever knew.—A. Certainly he was; but Mr. Greeley insists on it to this day.

Q. Where did you go then; what was your next service?—A. After the 1st of January I was West. I was in the State of Illinois, and also in the State of Indiana, on private du-

ties; matters that did not amount to a great deal, but still something to Mr. Lincoln. He wanted some parties set right who did not understand him correctly.

Q. And you proceeded under his orders?—A. Yes, sir, under his orders.

Q. Did you report again to him?—A. Yes, sir.

Q. In what way?—A. I reported to him finally in person, with a view to closing up my business with him and returning to my command at the front.

Q. Where was your regiment then?—A. My regiment was with General Thomas, at Nashville, and I wished to return to it. Mr. Lincoln's plan was at one time to go to the front, and I was to go with him to General Grant's headquarters; but he changed that plan, and requested me to go upon another little private matter; in fact, I may say it was to see Mr. Greeley a second time, and he and I were to meet again. He spoke of my accounts—of paying me out of the secret-service fund what was due me, and we were to meet again. He was only to be gone to the front for a few days. I went to New York, and when I came back he had not returned. I waited here two or three days, and had to leave. My daughter was to be married at Quincy, Illinois, and would not allow anybody to marry her but myself; so I had to go there and attend to that duty.

Q. You are a clergyman?—A. Yes, sir.

Q. Having legal authority to solemnize marriage?—A. Yes, sir. I went to attend to that duty, and while at home the terrible news of Mr. Lincoln's assassination reached me.

Q. Had you presented to Mr. Lincoln, at any time before his death, an account of your disbursements while on this secret service?—A. Yes, sir; I had presented to him a full account of my disbursements, and supposed it was to be approved.

Q. Had you handed him your account?—A. I did not hand it to him in person; I sent it to him with my final report. He subsequently told me that he had received it, and Secretary Seward, I suppose, saw it; Mr. Stanton did, I know for he told me so, and told me it was on file at Mr. Lincoln's office.

Q. Do you recollect the aggregate amount charged in that bill as the balance due to you for moneys expended on that secret service?—A. I have the figures; the amount was \$6,719.

Q. Which you had actually expended out of your own pocket while on this secret service?—A. Yes, sir.

Q. Now, state to the committee whether any part of these disbursements by you was ever reimbursed to you.—A. No part of this amount ever was. In the year 1863, for a month or two, I was also on secret service, and inside of the confederate lines. My expenses in 1863 on that service were settled by Mr. Lincoln out of the secret-service fund. That was a small amount. It was before this leave of absence which I have shown you. While I was on this service in 1864 and 1865, I received not one cent from the Government except my pay, which I drew regularly as colonel of the Seventy-third Regiment Illinois Volunteers.

Q. Are you ready to swear that you have never been reimbursed that sum of \$6,719, or any part of it?—A. I am ready to swear, in the presence of the Searcher of all hearts, that I have never received one copper cent of it. I do not know that I have received even thanks for it; but I did not work for thanks.

Q. Did you have any conversation with Mr. Lincoln after the rendition of this account respecting it?—A. Yes, sir.

Q. What did he say in regard to the payment of this account to you?—A. He said that I should receive at least that amount, and intimated to me that money really would not pay me for the services I had rendered. I had to go to attend to a matter that he wished me to attend to in New York, and I did not care about carrying the money with me.

Q. Did he offer to pay you this account?—A. Not at that time; but he said he was not quite done with me, and would settle the matter when he came back from the front.

Q. What has become of that account?—A. I have no idea.

Q. Did the account ever pass into the hands of the Secretary of War?—A. The Secretary of War saw it, for he told me so. It never passed into his hands, to my knowledge, but he told me he saw it at headquarters. The way he came to tell me about it was this: When I went to the Secretary of War in reference to the matter, he advised me not to make application to Mr. Johnson, for reasons which he stated, and they were good reasons. I suggested to him that I feared it would prejudice the case. He said it could not, "For," he said, "your papers are on file at the Executive Mansion"—I think those were the exact words—"and delay cannot prejudice the case; I have seen the papers and examined them."

Hon. JAMES HARLAN, being present, was examined as follows:

By Mr. HOWARD:

Question. How long have you been acquainted with Colonel Jaquess?—Answer. Over twenty-five years. We were in college together and graduated in the same class.

Q. What has been Colonel Jaquess's profession in life?—A. After leaving college he entered the ministry, and afterward engaged in teaching. He was president of one of the colleges connected with the church to which he belongs for a time; I think he was president of it at the time the war began, and resigned to join the Army.

Q. What can you say as to Colonel Jaquess's character for truth and veracity, and as a man of honor?—A. I would believe him as implicitly as I would any man I ever knew.

Q. You have heard his statement here?—A. I have listened to it.

Q. Are you prepared to say to the committee that you believe it?—A. I do, most implicitly.

Q. You said you had seen some of the papers of Colonel Jaquess?—A. Yes, I saw a number of the papers connected with the transaction referred to in Colonel Jaquess's narrative. Perhaps I ought to state how I happened to see them. I was here on what was called the congressional committee for the preparation and circulation of political documents during the presidential campaign of 1864. Governor Morgan, of New York, Governor Morrill, of Maine, and myself, were appointed on the part of the Senate. My associates were unable to be here, and I was obliged to remain, and so virtually became chairman of the committee, and kept a political oversight of the political view of military events. During the progress of that political campaign, as the gentlemen of this committee will probably remember, it was urged by the political opponents of the administration that President Lincoln was not willing to have the war ended; that he would not permit any parties to come to the national capital from the rebels to negotiate; that they were repelled whenever they made any attempt at an amicable adjustment; that this vast bloodshed and expenditure of national treasure was not only wrong, but grew out of the foolhardiness of the administration. We desired, as a committee, to meet that view of the case. I had an interview with Mr. Lincoln in relation to it, and said to him that while we knew there was no truth in it, the public were not sure but that there was something in it; that these repeated declarations were making an impression on the public mind. Some time afterward Colonel Jaquess appeared here. I knew nothing of the means adopted to get access to the rebels for the purpose of bringing them to the point of a statement of what their proposition for peace would be. In the course of time Colonel Jaquess turned up here in Washington, and had an interview with me. He stated where he had been and who directed him to go, and also the means he had to adopt to get through; that he was not commissioned to go, for he could not go directly from the President, as the President's messenger; but he went as a volunteer, having written on a card which I saw, addressed to General Grant, the words, "Permit Colonel Jaquess to pass through the lines," signed by President Lincoln. I think those words were on a card; if not, they were in a note to General Grant to let Colonel Jaquess pass. He went through as a volunteer, and went for the purpose which I had stated to the President. We wished to know what the rebels' terms of peace were, and wished to be able to publish them. Colonel Jaquess, as I before remarked, saw me and stated all the facts that had occurred. I told him that I thought we should want to publish the substance of his statement, and I asked him to remain over, which he did, and in the mean time I intimated our wishes on that subject directly to the Executive, and afterward got Mr. Sutton, the then reporter of the Senate, to meet the colonel and myself, and he took down Colonel Jaquess's narrative. It was written, and I made a campaign document of it, publishing that part of it which related to the political questions which were then pending. I also knew of the trip to Canada. As you will remember, at the time Mr. Greeley gave great countenance to the assertion on the part of the democrats that Mr. Lincoln would not let anybody come here, and Mr. Lincoln, under the excitement, wrote a letter to Mr. Greeley authorizing him to bring here anybody that was authorized to make peace. But afterward Mr. Lincoln became satisfied that it was merely a ruse on their part to make a political impression, and probably to get through the lines to their own government. Colonel Jaquess's interview was had with a view of, as he expressed it, "cracking that nut," and after Colonel Jaquess's interview with them, the President wrote a letter "to whom it may concern," which all may remember was published in the papers. You will see the point of it when you refer to Kettell's History, which has been spoken of, on page 671.

[The letter on page 671 of the book referred to is as follows:

"EXECUTIVE MANSION,

"Washington, July—, 1864.

"To whom it may concern:

"Any proposition which embraces the restoration of peace, the integrity of the whole Union, and the abandonment of slavery, and which comes by and with an authority that can control the armies now at war against the United States, will be received and considered by the executive government of the United States, and will be met by liberal terms on unsubstantial and collateral points, and the bearer or bearers thereof shall have safe conduct both ways.

"ABRAHAM LINCOLN."]

That was done in pursuance of information derived from rebels, I think through this intimation, and was to meet that impression which was being made by the democrats. We knew it was all a sham, but we wanted to bring it out authentically.

[Colonel Jaquess here produced a copy of the following paper from President Lincoln:

"WASHINGTON, D. C., February 21, 1865.

"To whom it may concern:

"Colonel J. F. Jaquess, of the Seventy-third regiment Illinois Volunteers, has been on

private duty under my direction since the 18th of May last. His services have been of great value to the country.

“A. LINCOLN.”]

I think I have stated all the personal knowledge I have of this matter until Colonel Jaquess called on me in this city, stating that his expenditures on these various missions had not been paid, and although he had the money at the time, he had not any now to spare, and would like to get it back. After consultation I suggested to him that I thought it could be paid out of the secret-service fund probably; not out of any other fund without a full *exposé* of all that had occurred, which perhaps would not be desirable; and he gave me his papers, including the original or a copy of a note of Mr. Lincoln, stating that he had been serving under his personal direction, and also a letter from the President, or a copy of it, I have forgotten which, to General Grant, directing him to let the colonel go through the lines, and various other papers, indicating performance of the service, which I inclosed, with a letter of my own to Secretary Seward suggesting that mode of payment. He responded to it, suggesting a difficulty unless it was approved by the War Department. He thought the Secretary of War was the proper person to arrange it with the President. This letter I sent by mail to Colonel Jaquess, he having left the city in the mean time. I never saw the letter again, I think. At Colonel Jaquess's suggestion I asked the Secretary of State to return these papers, which he did, and I inclosed them, if I remember correctly, to Colonel Jaquess, by mail, and learned from him that he had afterward given them to Governor Yates, of Illinois, now and at that time Senator from that State. I learned from Colonel Jaquess that the Secretary of War, on being approached upon the subject, thought it was better to let the matter rest until there was a change in the administration, because his relations were not as pleasant as they ought to be with the President, (Johnson,) and I felt that I could not approach the President at that time on such a subject.

Colonel J. F. JAQUESS being again examined, testified:

By Mr. HOWARD:

Question. Did you hand your papers to Senator Yates, as stated by Senator Harlan?—Answer. I sent them by mail to him.

Q. Have you seen Mr. Yates and inquired for those papers?—A. Yes, sir; I went to him yesterday morning, but Senator Yates has no remembrance whatever of his ever having received any papers from me. He gave me permission to search among his papers for them; and although I made diligent search I could not find them. In regard to the Niagara Falls negotiation, the effect produced by Mr. Lincoln's letter, read by Senator Harlan, may be judged by the following extract from Kettell's History:

“The effect produced by this document is indicated in the paper signed C. C. Clay, jr., and James P. Holcombe, in which is found the following: ‘Instead of the safe conduct which we solicited, and which your first letter gave us every reason to suppose would be extended, for the purpose of initiating a negotiation in which neither government would compromise its rights or its dignity, a document has been presented which provokes as much indignation as surprise. It bears no feature of resemblance to that which was originally offered, and is unlike any paper which ever before emanated from the constitutional executive of a free people. Addressed “to whom it may concern,” it precludes negotiation and prescribes in advance the terms and conditions of peace. It returns to the original policy of “no bargaining, no negotiation, no truces with rebels, except to bury their dead, until every man shall have laid down his arms, submitted to the government, and sued for mercy.” What may be the explanation of this sudden and entire change in the views of the President; of this rude withdrawal of a courteous overture for negotiation at the moment it was likely to be accepted; of this emphatic recall of words of peace just uttered, and fresh blasts of war to the bitter end, we leave for the speculation of those who have the means or inclination to penetrate the mysteries of his cabinet or fathom the caprices of his imperial will. It is enough for us to say that we have no use whatever for the paper which has been placed in our hands. We could not transmit it to the president of the Confederate States without offering him an indignity, dishonoring ourselves and incurring the well-merited scorn of our countrymen.”

That the “special service for which I had been designated,” in the language of one of the papers before the committee, was not one of mere pastime or romance, but that it was beset by great difficulty, and surrounded by imminent peril at each and every step, I beg leave to call the attention of the committee to a few facts.

When I reported to General (now President) Grant, at his headquarters, on the James River, in front of Richmond, with a note from Mr. Lincoln, requesting him to pass me through the lines, the General said, in his laconic style, “The thing is impossible; I have not been able to get those people to answer a flag of truce for more than thirty days;” pointing in the direction of the enemy's lines. “And besides that,” continued the General, “you could not live twenty-four hours inside of their lines.” He went on to state, what I well knew to be true, that the hanging of spies, on both sides, was a matter of frequent occurrence, and that the position of the two armies was such that the closest scrutiny was

"kept up in that direction. "The thing was simply impossible." My reply was, "General, as to the enemy answering a flag of truce, send one out in the morning, and it will be answered immediately." This interview took place in the afternoon. "I do not see why you think so," replied the General; "I sent one out this forenoon, and they paid no attention to it." "Try it again to-morrow morning, General," said I, "and it will be answered." "Well," said the General, good-humoredly, "I will try it, but what message shall I send?" It was finally agreed that he would send this message with a flag of truce: "Will Colonel Ould, commissioner for the exchange of prisoners, Confederate States army, meet Colonel James F. Jaquess, of the Seventy-third regiment, Illinois Volunteers, United States Army, on important business in the line of his duty? If so, please state the time and the place of meeting." Signed by General Grant, officially. I was to call on General Grant for the result the next afternoon, say about 3 o'clock. I called at the appointed time, and the General met me at his tent door, with a smile and a cigar, and said, "Well, colonel, they did answer, sure enough, and here is the reply:" "Colonel Ould will meet Colonel Jaquess to-morrow morning at 9 o'clock, near Mrs. Glenn's house." Signed by R. E. Lee, officially.

The case was then referred by General Grant to General Butler, to be executed in detail. When I reported to General Butler and explained to him the order and my intention of entering the rebel lines, he said, "GOOD CHANCE TO GET HUNG." And when arrangements were completed, and I was about to take my final departure for Richmond, General Butler said, in very consoling terms, "If the rebels hang you, Jaquess, I'll hang two of them in your place, *better men than you are.*"

The further detail of my visit to Richmond; my interview with Davis, though highly romantic, full of interesting incidents, and replete with important facts, I cannot give here. It was reported by me in full to Mr. Lincoln, and subsequently in the presence of Senator Harlan, appointed for the purpose, taken down by Mr. Sutton as I repeated it, and, as I supposed, filed in Mr. Lincoln's office.

It contained two important propositions, which I got from Davis, distinctly stated:

1st. "*We are NOT fighting for slavery!*"

2d. "*WE ARE fighting for independence; and our independence we will have, or we will have annihilation!!*"

It was these declarations, so strongly put and insisted upon by Mr. Davis, together with facts developed in my first visit to the rebel emissaries in Canada, that produced the marked change in Mr. Lincoln's mind, so bitterly denounced by them and complained of by Mr. Greeley.

It is a little remarkable that the author referred to, Mr. Kettell, in his account of my visit to Richmond, should close that account by saying that Colonel Jaquess "*came back no wiser than he went.*" It is scarcely a supposable case, that a man should enter the rebel lines with his eyes and ears open, spend three days in the rebel capital, and have a protracted interview with the rebel chief, and come back with no valuable information. Mr. Lincoln did not so consider it; for he said, "your information is worth millions to us." He saw the inside however; others saw only its exterior.

My second visit into the confederate lines was planned and executed under the following circumstances: While in Richmond, on my former visit, I discovered—from what sources I need not here mention—distinct and definite traces of a plot to burn our northern cities, and our shipping, steamboats, and water craft generally. There were intimations of such a plot floating about among us, in rumor, and what some thought simple surmise, sufficient, however, to create some fears that it might be so. Some demonstrations had been discovered, which, it was thought, looked in that direction, and resulted in some arrests; all taken together under the consideration of the thoughtful, seemed to foreshadow the coming of a fearful storm, that should destroy life by thousands, and annihilate property by millions. On my first visit to Canada, which was made in my true character and real name, many persons came to me as they did everywhere, to make inquiry about friends and acquaintances, &c., and seemed to think that as I had been in the confederate lines I must know something of everybody. Among others came a man of genteel appearance, calling himself Dr.——, (not his real name, however, for he subsequently gave me a different one which he said was his real name.) The doctor had learned that General Joe Johnson had hung his brother as a spy, some time on his, Johnson's, retreat before Sherman, in Northern Georgia. The doctor manifested much concern and uneasiness about his brother. It had so happened, on our march in pursuit of Johnson's retreating forces, after the battle near Resaca, Georgia, as we were at a halt in the village, an aged colored man pointed out to me a spreading oak tree, on a convenient limb of which "Mr. Johnson had hung a Yankee for *spyin' round*," as he termed it. There was a small mound of fresh earth under the tree, indicating that something was buried there. This information did not seem to allay, in the least, the doctor's fears in reference to his brother's fate. I had some confidential talk with him, and soon discovered that he could be made of use to us, and so put him "in soak" for a few days till I could report important facts to Mr. Lincoln, and return. I returned to Washington, made my report to Mr. Lincoln, in which he not only saw the nut "cracked," but spread out before him and full of rottenness. It was decided that I should return to Canada immediately, which I did, and found the doctor well

"soaked," and in good shape to be handled. I took hold of the case, and soon found that he was one of the detail to burn northern cities, &c. At this time the organization, in its northern branch, was discussing the propriety of transferring the *headquarters* of the scheme to some point in the *enemy's country*, instead of retaining it at the rebel capital, and thus avoiding the perils of crossing the lines, which had proved rather uncertain and dangerous business. Already some delay and mishaps had occurred, which it was thought might be avoided in future by this change of base operations.

There was an arrangement among the confederates in Canada for the doctor to enter the confederate lines as best he could, and arrange this little item of business with the authorities at Richmond; and he had consented to undertake it, provided he could see his way clear to do it. But the reports made by me in reference to his brother's fate had had a wholesome influence upon his fears, and he had begun to think that his own life was in danger, amid the perils of burning northern cities or crossing the lines into a country where it was currently reported that they hung people with but little ceremony.

He was also supplied with a full outfit of papers, documents, and secret trinkets, new to me, any or all of which he proposed to transfer to me, upon the condition of profound secrecy and that I would help him to means to proceed to Resaca to look after his brother. Among the papers which he showed me was one, well and peculiarly executed, bearing the signature of *John C. Breckinridge*. This I took. He gave me the name of a party connected with the *incendiary bureau*, whom I would find, according to his instructions, at Petersburg, Virginia. He had never seen him. I gave him money for his journey to Resaca. I came again to Mr. Lincoln and made a full statement of all these facts, and also a report of other items gleaned in Canada, simply corroborating and strengthening my other items of information.

The great question now to be solved was, how to meet the "*incendiary movement*." In answer to a direct question from me, as to what should be done, Mr. Lincoln, in one of his most sober and thoughtful moods, said, "You are in water too deep for me."

To organize a police force sufficient to meet the case was impossible under the circumstances. "Let us go over and see Stanton," said Mr. Lincoln. We walked over to the War Office. Mr. Stanton was not there. I looked upon it then, as now, as providential; for in wiser counsels plans less efficient and successful might have been adopted. My mind was fully made up as to what I would do, viz, to enter again the rebel lines. Mr. Lincoln said, when my plan was unfolded to him, that I would be likely to lose my life. Mr. Lincoln objected seriously to my plan, and remonstrated with me on the ground of its exceeding great danger, and said, pleasantly, "You are worth more to us than all the confederacy." I told him that I had already been twice over the ground and could trust my life again in hope of preventing so terrible a calamity as seemed hanging over our people. And furthermore, I reminded him that he had some time since pledged himself "to see that my family should be well provided for if I fell in any of my perilous journeyings."

After some further talk and consultation, at my request he turned to his desk and wrote two passes, one addressed "To whom it may concern," giving me "full authority and permission to go wherever the American flag floats, and to use any conveyance, public or private, which might lie in his line of travel, on land or water, without let or hinderance." The other said, "Pass the bearer, Dr. ———, through the lines," filling the blank with the name on my Breckinridge papers, and signing his name. With these papers I proceeded to the front, on strictly private business. I avoided, as far as possible, any and all recognition, so that my presence in that quarter should not become matter of newspaper report, and thus a trap or a net be spread for my feet inside the rebel lines. I proceeded up the James River as far as our transports were running at that time, and then taking a flag-of-truce boat beyond till I came in about fourteen miles of Richmond, I disembarked. Found ready means of passing our lines with my paper "To whom it may concern."

My Breckinridge paper passed me without question or scrutiny, through the rebel lines. And on the back of a rough confederate cavalry horse, in company with a small squad of scouts, I made my way to Petersburg; arrived late in the afternoon of the same day, after one of the most unpleasant day's rides of my whole life. I had but little trouble in finding the whereabouts of my man, but he had changed his headquarters to Richmond, and thither I took up my line of march late in the afternoon, in a rickety car drawn by a crazy old locomotive. I reached Richmond after dark; found lodgings, and was ready for work next morning. It was with some difficulty, however, that I found my man. My movements had to be of the most cautious character possible; I felt that I was moving with a rope round my neck, but believed myself in the line of duty, under the direction and protection of Providence, and that, therefore, I was safe from harm. Several persons, of whom I inquired, assured me that my man was in Petersburg. Finally, about two o'clock in the afternoon, by what appeared to be the merest accident—if there be any such thing as accident in the events of this world—I found my man.

I presented my "Breckinridge paper," which he seemed to understand at once. I said to him, "I expected to find you in Petersburg," "Yes," said he, "I was there, but Yankee shells seemed rather uncomfortable there, so we came here."

He then proceeded to explain the reason of some perplexing delays in "our business," their causes, remedies, and talked and looked widely over the matter.

I explained to him the object of my visit there, which was to make arrangements to transfer the manufacture of the incendiary matches, together with the whole business, into the heart of the enemy's country north, or, at least, to take it to some point near the border, where we had every facility for planning and executing the work. He thought it a matter of doubtful experiment, but said that he had nothing to do with the manufacture of the agencies—his business was to distribute; but that I had better see the chemist and talk with him. I asked him to give me a line to him, but he said my paper was all that I wanted. I then asked him for an escort, and he sent a boy some twelve years of age to show me the chemist's office, where I was to see the man most important for me to see, and still the most dangerous man on earth for me to approach; the man charged with the awful work of constructing the match that was designed for such horrible mischief.

A few minutes' walk took me to the office of the chemist. I found him a man of very different appearance from what I was accustomed to meet, in these times, in the South; more of that expression that indicates heart, feeling, and culture, and much less of that wild, savage, beast-like expression which sat upon the faces of rebels everywhere, male and female. When I handed him my paper he received it, looked at it, and turned it over, as if he quite understood its meaning and import; then appeared on his face what I thought indicated regret; and as I had a rope around my neck, I confess I felt a little anxious to know whether I was in the presence of the man who was to pull it, or untie it, so that my powers of reading characters were kept in full play. He turned his eye upon me as one would look upon the hangman who was about to execute the sentence of the law and strangle his victim. I stated to him, as I had done to the other party, that I was there to see if the whole thing, preparation and execution and all, could not be transferred to the North, &c. He replied that he had no discretion in the matter; that he was working under orders; that he was charged with the manufacture of the matches simply; and that he was opposed to the whole thing anyhow. It was not sanctioned by the laws of war. It was unworthy of a people that claimed the Divine sanction in justification of their efforts to save and defend themselves; that it would defeat the very end its projectors had in view, viz, to influence the election for President at the North. Instead of defeating the Lincoln party it would insure their success. "Besides this," said he, "our cause is utterly hopeless. What can we longer hope for against such fearful odds? And besides all this the terms of peace offered by the Government at Washington recently, '*universal amnesty*,' is converting our army into a rope of sand. We could scarcely hold the army together before, and this is making the case doubly desperate. More were at home than in the army, and now, all determined to go that can do so with any show of success. I tell you, sir, it is all useless and wrong, and I have told the authorities so; but I am as powerless as the soldier in the ranks. I am under orders as well as he, and we are destined all to go up together."

After some further talk about the case, in which I got up close to him in feeling and expression, and sanctioned all he said, I gave him my real name. He supposed that I "had come to him under an assumed name;" and when I pronounced my name as I am accustomed to pronounce it, and as not one person in a hundred will pronounce it, seeing it written or printed, he manifested no surprise, but simply remarked that it was foreign, he supposed. But when I informed him that I was the party to whom he had just alluded, who had come from Washington with terms of peace to Mr. Davis, he sprang to his feet and grasped my hand, and pronounced a solemn blessing upon me for my effort in the cause of suffering humanity. After some inquiries as to the status of things among us North, and the inconsistency of Davis declining what he himself earnestly wanted, viz, to accept the terms of peace proposed, we closed the interview, to renew it next morning. He walked with me to a private boarding-house, where he said I would be well cared for, and gave me *one hundred dollars confederate money to pay my bill*, which I thought a liberal sum for the purpose, but found next day that it required seventy-five dollars of the money to pay the bill; part of the balance I have yet. Though I felt secure in my lodging, and in one respect felt that I had been fortunate in meeting with one man that I could trust, yet I spent a sleepless night. I felt that I could trust my new acquaintance, but he was powerless in the hands of a government under the control of men fighting in spirit of despair—men who had long ceased to be men in the sense in which men are human beings. My friend called for me early in the morning, and without any reference to business hours we proceeded to his office. As we walked, he remarked that he had spent a "sleepless night." He had been searching for an expedient that would defeat these schemes of mischief, and that he thought he had fallen upon one that would meet the case. When we entered the office he gave me his idea, and, from my knowledge of chemistry, I believed it could be done. My fear was that he had not the necessary chemicals on hand to perfect the experiment, but with a little searching the formula was complete, and in two hours' time the experiment was a success; and the experiments, as stated in a former paragraph of these notes before the committee, passed through.

The *incendiary matches* were manufactured under the orders of the confederate government, though by this *formula*, unknown to them to this day, with a view to the destruction of human life, and the annihilation of property at the North, but not in one single instance did they succeed. That they failed was not because the train was not laid in the right place, or the match applied at the right time; these things were done according to orders,

and the scheme was so far a complete success, but, under God, the self-extinguishment was a success also.

The rest of my work in this expedition was easy. Fortified by an additional paper, which my friend secured for me, I passed from the rebel capital, over the same route by which I had left it before, and entered our lines, where I had passed them as I entered two days before. As there was no transportation by water, no flag of truce boat there at the time, I took transportation on horseback to *Point of Rocks*, and with two changes of boat reached Washington and reported to Mr. Lincoln, ready for future operations.

Names are withheld in this statement for obvious reasons. These can be had, however, when the public good requires that they should be made known.

One question, connected with my operations, seems, I am informed, to require explanation, viz: *Why I should use my own money in this service?* My only and sufficient reply is found in the feelings and experience of every member of this committee. There was but one sentiment among the loyal people of the country, and that was, that "if the country is lost, all is lost." Money, and all that we had learned to consider valuable, was worthless. Liberty was a failure, self-government a failure, yes, and the redemption of man a failure. And everything on earth worth a thought went down into one common grave, to *know no resurrection forever*.

Business men were coming to the rescue, and investing means that, under other circumstances, could not be spared from their business, not as matters of speculation, but to strengthen the sinews of war, and to give confidence to the public credit, that the Government might command their means to prosecute the war to the utter extermination of its enemies, if need be.

Individual States were organizing, drilling, arming, and equipping troops, and pushing them to the front, to fill the broken ranks, with a promptness and liberality that astonished the nations, and commanded the admiration of the world, and relying wholly upon the good faith and credit of the General Government for reimbursement.

Under these circumstances it would have been an act of bad faith on my part to have distrusted my Government, a thing I never did, even in the darkest days of the republic. I could not go, as the hireling goes to his employer at the close of each day, to demand remuneration for what was only commenced. I had the money, and therefore, as a matter of choice, used it; used it as I used head, heart, life, and my whole being, in doing what I could to save the country.

At the beginning of the terrible struggle, under the Divine sanction, and with the approval of my conscience, I most solemnly and sacredly dedicated my life, my all, to my country. That I live, is not because I kept out of the reach of danger or the range of the enemy's guns, or shirked any duty, or shunned any responsibility; but I live because a merciful God *wonderfully and miraculously* preserved me. With a motive that knew nothing of fame or dollars and cents, and with a step as unflinching as the pulsations of my heart, I went forward in the discharge of my duty, following, as best I could, the openings of Providence. Where duty led there I went, and my only regret to-day is, that I had so little to consecrate to my God and to my country.

